

Needing God's Leading, Part 1 - Romans 2:1-5 – April 17th, 2011

- As we begin a new chapter, it incumbent upon us to remember verses sixteen and seventeen remain as a lynchpin from the previous chapter.

Romans 1:16-17 NIV I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

- As one so aptly put it, "Romans two supports the manifesto message of Romans 1:16-17, [in that], the saving righteousness of God is revealed to anyone who bows the knee with the obedience of faith, but to no-one else."

- We are about to see the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, ever so beautifully, and brilliantly, moves from the guilt of the immoral to the moral.
- In 1:18-32, we saw God as right to damn the wrong of the evil practices of the immoral. Now it's those who fancy themselves as being moral.
- The purpose is that God is leading all mankind to the conclusion that he is guilty before the Judge of the universe in the courtroom of eternity.

William Newell - "We have traced the awful history of the human race in iniquity and idolatry, ...and have seen that fearful indictment of above twenty counts which ends Chapter One. We now enter upon the greatest passage in all Scripture as to the principles and processes of God in His estimate, or judgment, concerning His creatures. If God is 'Judge of all,' and if the whole world is to be 'brought under the judgment of God,' ...God will surely take pains to make known the great principles of His action, so that men may know beforehand how He will decide and act. Otherwise, men would 'imagine vain things' about the true God, and hug their delusions to their own damnation."

- It's for this reason I've titled this series; "Needing God's Leading." Today will part one of what I hope is, an introspective study of God's Word.
- What I mean by that is this; as born again Christian's, and I would venture to say most in this church are, we tend to see ourselves as moral.
- Of course, morality should characterize the life of a believer but, it's when a religious morality becomes the replacement for a spiritual maturity.

- The difference between religious morality, and spiritual maturity, is that one is plastic and manufactured, and the other is organic and grown.
- By way of illustration, religious morality is the bowl of plastic fruit, whereas spiritual maturity is the real deal as the bowl of real delicious fruit.
- I would suggest that the church today has become plastic, shallow, and fake. Outwardly, there's this morality, but inwardly, there's no maturity.

- The danger for us as the church of Jesus Christ, is that we can misrepresent the grace we've been the recipient of when coming to Christ.
- Sadly, an un-Christian world sees this so called "religious morality" in the Christian world as judging, condescending, and even condemning.
- I believe one reason we have chapters like this in the Bible, is so that the Holy Spirit can lead us back to that real deal Christianity of the Bible.

1. To Self-Judgment (Verse 1)

1) You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

-v1 Paul says, they too have no excuse because they pass judgment on and are condemning of those doing what they themselves are guilty of.
- This is interesting; in effect, Paul is telling them that every time they condemn someone else, they are condemning themselves before God.
- God judges me by the same standard that I judge. This principle is echoed throughout the scriptures and is replete in the pages of Holy Writ.

Matthew 7:1-2 NIV "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Luke 6:37 NIV "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 NIV But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

- Does this mean we should never judge the sinful practices of another? No, being judgmental isn't synonymous with having good judgment.
- As one so aptly put it, we should be fruit inspectors with good judgment not judges in a court of law simply passing judgment and condemning.
- Suffice it to say, this is yet another "why" behind the "what" of God's Word as it relates to the text we have before us. Judge self - not others.

2. To Truth (Verses 2-3)

(2) Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. (3) So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

-v2 Paul sort of reiterates that God's judgments are righteous and just against those who do such things because it's based on the truth of God.
-v3 Paul then asks; when we, as mere men, pass judgment on others and yet do the same things, do we think we'll escape God's judgment?
- It's vital we remember that Paul is still arguing his case for man's ungodliness and unrighteousness, and God's justice and righteousness.

- Here's a question; "In light of a just and righteous God, why does Paul make such a big deal about being so judgmental and condemning?
- It's because we, like them, are prone to think we're justified in our disapproval of the practices mentioned at the end of the previous chapter.
- The truth is, we are right to disapprove of evil but, we are most certainly wrong if we falsely think our disapproval means we won't be judged.

- If the truth be known, we're all prone to see ourselves as rather good people as compared to the depraved and wicked people in chapter one.
- I suppose you could say that the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul's epistle, is making it very clear that this is not based in reality nor truth.
- This brings up an issue that I've personally been conflicted about as of late, as it relates to this new age movement of reclaiming America.

- Knowing I don't have the time to get into this, nor do I necessarily want to get into this, I do want to recommend an article by The Berean Call.
- I am keenly aware that this may come as a shock to the tried and true, "Fox News Fans," but the article is titled; "Glen Beck's Bogus Beliefs."
- The subtitle says it all; "Does Beck have the 'Treasure' of 'Truth' that will Restore America." You can read the article at www.thebereancall.org.

3. To Repentance (Verses 4-5)

(4) Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? (5) But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

-v4 Paul asks them about showing contempt for God's tolerance, and patience, not realizing it's God's kindness that leads one to repentance.

-v5 He goes on to say that it's their stubbornness and unrepentant heart that is storing up God's wrath against them on the day of judgment.

- What Paul is not saying is that every single time we sin and don't repent, we're subject to God's wrath. God's grace is not that ambiguous.

One commentator said it best when they wrote; "We must not misunderstand this - as those with sensitive consciences are likely to do - to mean that my security is only as strong as my most recent repentance, or that every time I sin, I place myself in danger of hell until I repent (because I fear that if I die with any unconfessed sin I will be condemned). That misunderstanding would be clean contrary to the gospel of grace which Paul expounds so wonderfully in this letter. Paul is not condemning shaky discipleship, but complacent and persistent hypocrisy, the pseudo-discipleship that thinks the need for repentance ended with my 'conversion.' What Paul wants to expose is not the life that sometimes falls into sin (and therefore needs repentance as an ongoing discipline), but rather the hard and impenitent heart that systematically will not repent. Paul speaks not to the penitent heart that lacks assurance, but to the impenitent heart that has a false assurance."

- Paul is speaking of the false, or fake, Christians, if you prefer. These are the ones who have contempt for, thus see no need for, repentance.

- It is to these who have both a stubborn and unrepentant heart that will one day stand before a just and Holy God on this day of God's wrath.

- Perhaps this is a good time to go on record and say that, very soon, the day is coming, when the righteous judgment of God will be revealed.

William Newell - So they are today, in these last days: "Treasuring up unto themselves wrath" for that fearful "day of wrath." Remember, if the goodness of God toward you is not leading you to repentance, then every day, every hour, you live, drops another drop into the terrible "treasure" of indignation which will burst the great dam of God's long-suffering—in the great Day of Wrath, when God shall reveal His righteous judgment! (Of course, if you flee to Calvary, you will "not come into judgment" (John 5:24): for Judgment has already struck there!)

- This brings us to two questions, the first of which is simply this; have you been led and fled in repentance to Calvary escaping judgment day?

- The second question is, if you have and are truly saved then what did the Holy Spirit show you today that you're needing God's leading to do?

- I'll ask it this way, and I ask it of myself too; am I needing to repent of my religious morality, because God is leading me to spiritual maturity?